

Every time a pilot applies for or renews a medical certificate, the form asks the pilot essentially to document every time he has ever received medical attention. It is highly unlikely that any applicant has ever complied completely since we all forget a doctor's visit or three now and then. After all, most such visits are trivial, and irrelevant.

After a few years of laboriously attempting to recall every medical interaction in my life, knowing it is nearly impossible to be complete and consistent year after year, I enquired and was taught the magic incantation "Previously reported; no change." That helped a lot! The form should invite that response, not keep it a secret that must be discovered separately by each pilot. Just ask explicitly only for new medical interactions since the last application. Better yet, allow on the form that only ailments requiring significant treatment or hospitalization, or with lingering effect, need be reported. You really don't need to know that in 1977 Joe Pilot saw a doctor for a case of food poisoning, right?

Best of all would be to eliminate the requirement for a third class medical certificate entirely. Accept a driver's license. We all self-certify every time we fly. That should be enough. Use plain English to tell us that if we have an illness that might reasonably be expected to impair our ability to fly then we must consult an AME.

Thanks for asking.